

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on July 19, 2005, in which all pending claims 1-4, 6-11, 14, 15, 17 and 18 were rejected and claims 5, 12, 13 and 16 were withdrawn from consideration as being a non-elected species. The Examiner rejected the claims for substantially the same reasons made in the Office Action of February 1, 2005. Specifically, claims 1-4, 6-8, 14, 15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,857,645 (Klein '645), in view of Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,988,852 (Klein '852), and claims 9-11 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein '645 in view of Klein '852 and Boyer, U.S. Patent No. 2,784,518 (Boyer '518). Additionally, the Examiner objected to the drawings for failing to show every feature of the invention as specified in the claims. Therefore, independent claims 1, 14 and 18 and FIGS. 1-3 have been amended to address these rejections. With the following remarks, claims 1-4, 6-11, 14, 15, 17 and 18 are presented for reconsideration and allowance.

Objections to the Drawings

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Specifically, the drawings were objected to for failing to show the first and second opposite ends of male connector 16. While Applicants believe the disclosure is quite clear on this point, revisions are proposed herein to advance prosecution. With this Amendment, amended drawing sheets are provided which identify by reference numerals the already shown first and second ends of male connector 16. Specifically, FIGS. 1-3 are amended to include reference numerals 16a and 16b which refer to the first end of male connector 16 and the second end of male connector 16, respectively. With the amended drawing sheets (and associated amendments to the Specification) the objections to the drawings are overcome and should be withdrawn. No new matter is introduced by these revisions.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 14, 15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,857,645 (Klein '645), in view of Klein, U.S. Patent No. 3,988,852 (Klein '852). The rejections to independent claims 1, 14 and 18 should be withdrawn because combining Klein '645 and Klein '852 fails to teach every element of the invention, as claimed in the amended claims. Klein '645 and Klein '852 do not teach the use of a male connector having resilient petals that deform when moved past an interior feature of a female connector. Klein '645 teaches the use of a female connector H. Klein '852 teaches the use of barbed steel hook shank 41. The examiner suggests that, when combined, steel hook shank 41 could be inserted into passageway 24 of female connector H thereby causing female connector H to expand to allow barbs 51 past an interior feature of female connector H. Even assuming the validity of this suggestion, this does not teach the presently claimed invention. The presently claimed invention teaches the use of a deformable male connector that deforms to allow the male connector past an interior feature of a female connector. Specifically, the present invention requires the use of a plurality of resilient petals 24. Steel hook shank 41 is not resilient and, more specifically, barbs 51 of steel hook shank 41 do not teach the use of resilient petals 24. In one embodiment of the invention of Klein '852, barbs 51a "cut a thread-like slit in" female connector H and are therefore not required to be resilient in order to move past female connector H. Therefore, the prior art does not teach all of the limitations of the presently claimed invention and Applicant respectfully requests that rejections to independent claims 1, 14 and 18 based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 2-4, and 6-11 depend from amended independent claim 1. Claims 15 and 17 depend from amended independent claim 14. As discussed above, Klein '645 and Klein '852 do not teach every element of the invention as claimed in amended claims 1 and 14. Therefore, Klein '645 and Klein '852 do not teach every element of dependent claims 2-4, 6-11, 15 and 17. Thus, claims 2-4, 6-11, 15 and 17 are allowable over the cited references, and the rejections of these claims should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, all pending claims 1-4, 6-11, 14, 15, 17 and 18 are in condition for allowance. A Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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